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C O N F I D E N T I A L TEGUCIGALPA 000458

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/14/2018

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SUBJECT: NOT JUST ANOTHER DAY OF NATIONAL STRIKES:  
PROSECUTORS' STRIKE ENDS WHILE 50,000 MARCH FOR PEACE

REF: A. TEGUCIGALPA 438

[1](#)B. TEGUCIGALPA 386

Classified By: Ambassador Charles A. Ford for reasons 1.4 (b & d)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary. Hondurans gathered around the country yesterday in the fifth day of national strikes since the occasionally violent demonstrations on April 17th. Unlike the incidents on the 17th and the disorganized efforts since, the events yesterday had positive results: the prosecutors ended their hunger strike as several hundred marchers arrived to support them in Tegucigalpa, and 50,000 marchers in San Pedro Sula demonstrated peacefully for greater security in the country. One of the few not to support the march in San Pedro Sula was Honduran President "Mel" Zelaya, who ranted about the peace marchers being the cause of corruption and calling them white-collar criminals. End Summary.

[1](#)2. (C) The Honduran prosecutors' hunger strike ended on May 14, 2008 after 38 days. (See reftels) The prosecutors ended the strike with a statement saying the first phase of the strike was over, but that their struggle against corruption would continue. The prosecutors' original demands were met by a compromise agreement crafted by Congressional President Roberto Micheletti -- cases they allege are being fixed will be audited, they will not lose their jobs, and their union will retain its authority. However, they lost on the demand they made once Zelaya got involved behind the scenes--that the Attorney General and his deputy be sacked. Under the terms of the congressional proposal that settled the strike, the Attorney General and his deputy will be subject to firing by the Congress if evidence of corruption involving them is uncovered. The prosecutors left open the possibility of returning to the strike in ten days if they do not see results from the compromise agreement.

[1](#)3. (C) Comment: Post has no information yet about why the prosecutors finally decided to accept the congressional compromise, which was signed several days ago and had not changed. It appears these career prosecutors had good intentions originally, but got swept up in a political power struggle. Several sources have suggested some of the strikers were becoming increasingly frustrated with the behind the scenes political manipulation of their cause. Both the Cardinal and the President of Congress told the Ambassador that the Wednesday Strike demonstrated very clearly the lack of public support the prosecutors had

generated, thus convincing them it was best to declare victory and quit. With this in mind, perhaps the prosecutors saw an opportunity to end the strike on their own terms yesterday, as Zelaya was departing the country. End comment.

14. (C) At the same time as yesterday's events in Tegucigalpa, nearly 50,000 people came out in San Pedro Sula to rally for peace. Several voices in San Pedro Sula, including the largest paper, are campaigning against the violence that plagues the country. Yesterday's rally was well-organized, peaceful, and demonstrated ordinary Hondurans' frustration with the security situation in the country. (Comment: Zelaya's comments attacking the peace marchers noted in paragraph 1 could have been due to misinformation or, more likely, because he was upset the organizers were marching for peace instead of in support of the prosecutors. Zelaya privately has been backing and trying to control the striking prosecutors in an effort to oust the Attorney General. See Reftel A.)  
Ford